

to follow I take an activity at its *symbolic* value, I am never suggesting that this is the *sole* meaning of the activity for the child, nor have I lost sight of its cognitive significance in a real world. Both the imaginative meaning and the cognitive value are there in every activity of the child. As with the adult, ^any single piece of behaviour has both its unconscious meaning and its significance in the stream of conscious thought and activity. One of these aspects is relevant for a given purpose of study, another for a different purpose.

There is of course also a differentiation in the relative emphasis on the phantasy* value or the cognitive value of any activity, according to the age of the child, the particular circumstance of the moment, and, in general, the degree of neurosis present. When, for example, a child of, say, fourteen to eighteen months, spends a large part of his waking time fitting things together, a lid on to a box, a stick into a hole, and so on, there can be no doubt that the cognitive activity, although present, is at a minimum.¹ Such a stereotyped action is best understood as a mode of discharging the anxiety raised by certain fundamental phantasies, connected in the first instance with unsatisfied oral longings. In his phantasy, the child is concerned with the relation between bodies and the primary phantasy is that of fitting his mother's nipple into his own mouth. From this aspect, the action may be an alternative to thumb-sucking. The same child fitting the Montessori cylinders into the block six months later is less completely under the domination of unconscious phantasy, and more concerned with the problem of space relations and skill

¹ " Would you give me your opinion of the following characteristic of my small son, aged fourteen months. Although this is not a problem

of management or upbringing, I feel certain it has some definite psychological significance. Since he has been able to use his hands sensibly, he has shown a very marked tendency to fit things together, and put his finger or a stick into any hole which comes into his vision. This last is quite irresistible—in fact, for an example, we are staying in a house with a dog, and the boy has no interest in the dog except to try and put his finger into the animal's nostrils. When left to play alone this is almost the only form of play which he uses. Toy animals, or a ball, have no joy for him, and a cigarette packet, and a small stick give him most amusement. He is very patient and persevering in his efforts to get things to fit. If he has a ring, he puts a drum stick through it, and a ball of crochet cotton is stuck, with great pains, on the end of a stick and waved aloft. He puts two mugs one inside the other, and so on. He is a very healthy, happy and good-natured baby altogether, and has been very easy to manage so far. "